

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION/THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER/CREATIVE PROJECT: Character

Strengths and Virtues in Relation to Well-Being in Gay and Lesbian Individuals

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The purpose of this study was to apply concepts of virtue and positive psychology to the understanding of well-being in gay and lesbian individuals. Ninety-two self-identified gay and lesbian university students between the ages of 18 and 30 completed an online research survey to assess their well-being and character strengths. Preliminary factor analysis revealed a two-factor virtue structure underlying the 24 character strengths as outlined by the Values In Action (VIA) inventory. Participants were grouped using cluster analysis, and discriminant analysis was then performed to differentiate between group membership based on virtue factors. Results suggest that individuals with high autonomy and low overall well-being score lower in interpersonal strengths than those with balanced well-being. As social support has been identified as a key factor related to well-being for this population, further attention is warranted to study the relationship between autonomy, interpersonal character strengths, and social support in this population.